

MAY 2009 PRESS RELEASES

For immediate release: May 01, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

State Officials to Make Announcement on North America Human Influenza A (H1N1)

MEDIA ADVISORY

INDIANAPOLIS---The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) will hold a media briefing today regarding the current outbreak of North America Human Influenza A (H1N1) in the United States.

WHO: State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D.
Joe Wainscott, executive director, IDHS

WHEN: Friday, May 1, 2009
3:00 p.m. (EST)

WHERE: Indiana State Department of Health
2 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN

MEDIA CONTACT: Emergency Operations Center - (317) 234-6713

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For immediate release: May 04, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
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State officials remind public to continue good hygiene practices

State officials remind the public to continue using good hygiene practices, including frequent hand washing, using alcohol-based hand sanitizers when a wash basin isn't available, and covering your cough or sneeze. State health officials say it's always a good idea to follow these precautions, but it is especially important during the current outbreak of North America Influenza A (H1N1).

The public is urged to stay home if they are sick with the flu and call the doctor for advice.

A toll-free number is available for the public to ask general questions about the current flu outbreak at 877-826-0011. The call center CANNOT give medical advice, so individuals with flu symptoms should contact a health care provider.

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For immediate release: May 05, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Confirmed Cases of H1N1 Remains at Three in Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS--- The Indiana State Department of Health has reported a total of three confirmed cases of North America Influenza A (H1N1) in Indiana. To date, there have been no additional confirmed cases.

We will continue to update the public as new information becomes available, but will only be reporting confirmed cases.

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For immediate release: May 05, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

State Confirms 12 Additional cases of Novel H1N1 flu

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) today reported 12 new confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in the following counties: Hendricks (1), Lake (3), Marion (5), Putnam (1), St. Joseph (1), and Tippecanoe (1). Health officials say because the ISDH Labs were able to start confirming cases this week, the agency was able to start getting caught up on testing. That brings the total number of confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in Indiana to 15.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced today a change in its interim guidance on closing schools and childcare facilities. According to the CDC, the disease currently being caused by this novel flu virus is similar to that typically caused by seasonal influenza. Although many people will get sick and a small number,

unfortunately, may become quite ill or even die, the available data do not indicate that this virus is causing unusually severe influenza at this time.

"More than 36,000 people die each year in the United States from flu-related illnesses every year," said State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. "It is important to note the precautions we have taken and the positive public health messages on good cough and hand hygiene are of significant benefit in protecting those in our state who are at greatest risk for serious complications from the flu."

With the modified policy being issued today, the CDC no longer recommends communities with a laboratory-confirmed case of influenza A H1N1 consider adopting school dismissal or childcare closure measures. The CDC recommends the primary means to reducing the spread of influenza in schools is:

Early identification of ill students and staff;
Staying home when ill, and
Good cough and hand hygiene etiquette.

"I recommend for schools in Indiana to follow the new CDC guidance," said Dr. Monroe. "Schools that were closed based on previous interim CDC guidance related to this outbreak may reopen. However, decisions about school closure are at the discretion of local authorities based on local considerations, including public concern and the impact of school absenteeism and staffing shortages."

Students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days, even if symptoms resolve sooner. Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

The CDC says the 2009 influenza A H1N1 virus is likely to circulate widely in our communities; if not now then almost certainly in the fall.

"The good news is we have more information on the 2009 H1N1 virus today than we did only one week ago. Unfortunately, much uncertainty remains," said Dr. Monroe. "The State Department of Health and the Department of Homeland Security will continue to work closely with our local, state, and federal partners to prevent the further spread of the novel H1N1 flu virus in our state and to be prepared for the possibility of a severe influenza season in the fall."

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For immediate release: May 06, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Indiana: New Novel H1N1 Flu Cases Confirmed

The Indiana State Department of Health reports 13 new confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in the following counties: Lake (4), Madison (1), Marion (7), and Porter (1).

This brings the total number of cases of the novel H1N1 flu in Indiana to 28, with the following county breakdown:

Hendricks County (1)
Lake (7)
Madison (1)
Marion (14)
Porter (1)
Putnam (1)
St. Joseph (2)
Tippecanoe (1)

Consumers can visit the www.IN.gov/flu for more information about the Novel H1N1 outbreak.

For other questions, citizens can call the Novel H1N1 Flu information line toll-free at (877) 826-0011 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. daily.

Media will be able to contact a public information officer at the EOC at (317) 234-6713.

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For immediate release: May 07, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
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Hoosiers, Watch Out for Scam Artists

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - Watch out for scam artists. That is the warning issued by officials with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

“Unfortunately in disaster situations, scam artists are often ready to take advantage of the misfortunes of others,” said IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott, Jr. “People should be especially alert for solicitors who promise to speed up the insurance or building permit process and those who ask for large cash deposits or advance payments in full.”

“Most service providers in the building industry are honest, but all too often disasters attract scam artists,” said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Regis Phelan. “Some may even claim to be FEMA certified, but FEMA does not certify or endorse any contractor.”

FEMA inspectors may come to your neighborhood and all FEMA inspectors will have proper photo identification. Remember, FEMA and SBA inspectors never charge applicants for disaster assistance or for inspections.

If you suspect contractor fraud or have complaints, contact Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller at the Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-382-5516, or online at www.IndianaConsumer.com, or contact your local Better Business Bureau. If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse involving FEMA disaster assistance programs, report it to FEMA's Inspector General 1-800-323-8603.

Consumers should be wary of contractors who:

- Lack proper identification. A FEMA or SBA shirt or jacket is not proof of someone's affiliation with an agency. Ask to see a photo identification card; if they don't have it, they are probably not legitimate.
- Go door-to-door. Persons going door-to-door to damaged homes, or phoning victims and claiming to be building contractors, could be frauds. If callers solicit personal information such as Social Security or bank account numbers, they are not legitimate.
- Charge fees to put customers on a list or to fill out forms. FEMA registers all applicants without charge and has experts at Disaster Recovery Centers and through the toll-free registration line 1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the speech- or hearing-impaired to assist with forms and to explain the many available assistance and loan programs.
- Offer to increase the amount of your disaster damage assessment. This is not wise and is a sure sign of a scam.
- Ask for cash upfront. Under no circumstances are FEMA and other agency representatives allowed to accept money.

FEMA inspectors assess damage but do not hire or endorse specific contractors.

Keep the following tips in mind when hiring a contractor:

- Get a written estimate. Compare services and prices before making a final decision. Also, read the fine print. Some contractors charge a fee for a written estimate, which is often applied to the cost of subsequent repairs they make.
- Check references. Contractors should be willing to provide names of previous customers. Call several former customers who had similar work done to make sure they were satisfied with the job.
- Ask for proof of insurance. Make sure the contractor carries general liability insurance and workers' compensation. If the contractor is not insured, the homeowner may be liable for accidents that occur on the property.
- Use reliable, licensed contractors. Call your local Better Business Bureau (and other

local sources) to inquire about a business before signing a contract.

- Insist on a written contract. A complete contract should state clearly all tasks to be performed, all associated costs and the payment schedule. Never sign a blank contract or one with blank spaces. Make sure the contract clearly states who will apply for the necessary permits or licenses. Have a lawyer review the contract if substantial costs are involved, and keep a copy for your records.
- Get guarantees in writing. Any guarantees made by the contractor should be written into the contract. The guarantee should state clearly what is guaranteed, who is responsible for the guarantee and how long the guarantee is valid.
- Obtain a local building permit, if required. Permits may be required for site work including demolition and reconstruction. Contact your local government for permit information.
- Make final payments when the work is completed. Do not sign completion papers or make the final payment until the work is completed to your satisfaction. A reputable contractor will not threaten you or pressure you to sign if the job is not finished properly.
- Pay by check. Avoid on-the-spot cash payments. The safest route is to write a check to the contracting company. A reasonable down payment is 30 percent of the total cost of the project to be paid upon initial delivery of materials. Federal law gives consumers a three-day "cooling off" period for unsolicited door-to-door sales of more than \$25.
- If necessary, cancel a contract in the proper manner. This should be done within three business days of signing. Be sure to follow the procedures for cancellation that are set out in the contract. Send the notification by registered mail with a return receipt to be signed by the contractor.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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For immediate release: May 07, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer

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Public Assistance Application Deadline Rapidly Approaching for Southern Indiana Counties

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – One week remains to file applications for Public Assistance as a result of the severe winter storms that affected the State of Indiana during the period of January 26-28, 2009.

Public Assistance (PA) funds for reimbursement and/or restoration are still available for the following counties: Jennings, Lawrence, Ohio, Posey, Ripley and Scott.

Southern Indiana state and local agencies and certain private non-profit organizations eligible for federal disaster assistance are encouraged to complete and submit the Request for Public Assistance (RPA) to the State of Indiana by close of business on Wednesday, May 6, 2009.

Private non-profit organizations wishing to apply for Public Assistance must also complete an additional qualifying form to determine eligibility. The forms are available online at www.in.gov/dhs. Completed forms should be sent to cspencer@dhs.in.gov or faxed to FEMA/DHS at 317-578-2447.

PA funds are made available on a cost sharing basis with FEMA paying 75 percent of the eligible costs. The remaining 25 percent of costs are the responsibility of the state/local agency or eligible non-profit organization. These funds are for damages or expenses incurred by state or local government agencies and certain private non-profit organizations during the incident period only. The assistance covers items such as emergency protective measures, debris removal, repair or replacement of roads, bridges, water control facilities, buildings, parks and other public infrastructure, equipment and utilities.

A total of 21 counties have been declared eligible for this winter storm declaration. The 15 counties listed as part of the original declaration were Clark, Crawford, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Orange, Perry, Spencer, Switzerland, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Washington.

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State Officials Announce Change in Toll-Free Hotline Hours

The state's toll-free hotline for general information on the Novel H1N1 Flu, (877) 826-0011, will maintain normal business operating hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please note, this hotline is NOT intended for the public to ask medical advice about symptoms. Call your health care provider if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms.

Media calls should be directed to the Emergency Operations Center at (317) 234-6713.

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For immediate release: May 07, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Indiana: New Novel H1N1 Flu Cases Confirmed

The Indiana State Department of Health reports 8 new confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in the following counties: Elkhart (1), Marion (6), and Putnam (1).

This brings the total number of cases of the novel H1N1 flu in Indiana to 36, with the following county breakdown:

- Elkhart County (1)
- Hendricks County (1)
- Lake (7)
- Madison (1)
- Marion (20)
- Porter (1)
- Putnam (2)
- St. Joseph (2)
- Tippecanoe (1)

Consumers can visit the www.IN.gov/flu for more information about the Novel H1N1 outbreak. For other questions, citizens can call the Novel H1N1 Flu information line toll-free at (877) 826-0011 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Media will be able to contact a public information officer at the EOC at (317) 234-6713

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For immediate release: May 11, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Indiana: New Novel H1N1 Flu Cases Confirmed

The Indiana State Department of Health reports 22 new confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in the following counties: Elkhart (1), Lake (7), Marion (13), and Putnam (1).

This brings the total number of cases of the novel H1N1 flu in Indiana to 61, with the following county breakdown:

- Elkhart County (2)
- Hendricks County (1)
- Lake (16)
- Madison (1)
- Marion (34)
- Porter (1)
- Putnam (3)
- St. Joseph (2)
- Tippecanoe (1)

Consumers can visit the www.IN.gov/flu for more information about the Novel H1N1 outbreak. For other questions, the public can call the Novel H1N1 Flu information line toll-free at (877) 826-0011 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday-Friday.

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For immediate release: May 11, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer

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Community Relations Working Storm-Affected Counties

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - Community Relations specialists from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are reaching out to Hoosiers affected by the March 8 – 14 severe storms and flooding.

Currently 13 Indiana counties are eligible for Individual Assistance: Allen, Carroll, DeKalb, Fulton, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Noble, Pulaski, White and Whitley.

FEMA representatives will always wear or carry an official U.S. Department of Homeland Security photo identification badge and usually wear FEMA clothing.

Community Relations teams are canvassing communities in the declared areas, offering homeowners, renters and business owners information about available disaster assistance programs.

Community Relations team members also meet with representatives of community-based agencies, community leaders and public officials. When Community Relations staff identifies unmet needs, information is communicated to the state or federal staff best able to respond.

Residents in need of assistance are urged to first register on-line @ www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for those with special speech or hearing needs.

Assistance programs may include grants to help individuals pay for temporary disaster housing; grants to owners for essential repairs to primary residences; and grants for serious disaster-related needs and expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations for losses not fully covered by insurance. These loans are at low interest rates and long terms that make the loans affordable. The SBA may lend up to \$200,000 to repair homes, up to \$40,000 to replace disaster-damaged personal property and a maximum of \$2 million is available for businesses with economic or physical losses.

Representatives of SBA are at all of the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) to meet individually with each resident or business owner to answer any questions about SBA's disaster loan program, help them complete a disaster loan application and accept completed applications. Anyone not able to go to a DRC should call the SBA Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 for SBA information and assistance or visit the SBA website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

Those affected by the disaster may apply for disaster loans from SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

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For immediate release: May 12, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Disaster Recovery Centers Closing, SBA Opening Disaster Loan Outreach Centers in Fulton County

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – The state/federal Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in Fulton County will shut down at close of business Saturday, May 16. The center, located in the Rochester Fire Department Training Room, 2006 E. State Road 14 in Rochester; will reopen Monday, May 18 as a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC), federal and state disaster officials announced today. The DLOC will be open until Thursday, May 28, closed on Monday, May 25 for the Memorial Day holiday.

Individuals with SBA questions may call the SBA Customer Service Center at 1-800-

659-2955 or TTY 1-800-877-8339 or visit SBA's Web site www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance. Help from SBA and FEMA may also be obtained by visiting a DRC at one of the following locations until further notice:

Pulaski County
Winamac Municipal
Utility Complex
623 W.11th St.
Winamac, Ind.
White County
White County
Emergency Manager's Office
315 N. Illinois Ave.
Monticello, Ind.

The DRCs are for those who have further questions and concerns. Services people can expect to receive at a DRC include:

- Guidance regarding disaster recovery;
- Clarification of any written correspondence received;
- Housing Assistance and Rental Resource information;
- Answers to questions and referrals to agencies that may provide further assistance;
- Status of applications being processed by FEMA;
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) program information; and
- Information from representatives of other federal, state and local agencies.

Applicants can continue to reach federal recovery experts by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the speech- and hearing-impaired. The FEMA registration/helpline numbers are operational from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. (EDT), seven days a week. On-line registration is available at www.disasterassistance.gov, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

June 22, 2009 is the last day applications will be accepted for Individual Assistance. Loan applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for disaster-related losses to real and personal property also must be submitted by that date.

Federal and state officials urge homeowners, renters and businesses affected by the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding March 8 - 14, to apply immediately by calling 1-800-621-FEMA or for those with hearing or visual impairments call TTY 1-800-462-7585. For more information about SBA, call the SBA Customer Service Center from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT) Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT), Saturday, at 1-800-659-2955 for information and assistance. Victims may apply online at <http://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. Applicants also may visit the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

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For immediate release: May 12, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: EOC Public Information Officer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

Indiana: New Novel H1N1 Flu Cases Confirmed

The Indiana State Department of Health reports nine new confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 flu in the following counties: Hamilton (1), Lake (1), Marion (4), Porter (2), and Tippecanoe (1).

This brings the total number of cases of the novel H1N1 flu in Indiana to 70, with the following county breakdown:

- Elkhart (2)
- Hamilton (1)
- Hendricks (1)
- Lake (17)
- Madison (1)
- Marion (38)
- Porter (3)
- Putnam (3)
- St. Joseph (2)
- Tippecanoe (2)

Consumers can visit the www.IN.gov/flu for more information about the Novel H1N1 outbreak. For other questions, the public can call the Novel H1N1 Flu information line toll-free at (877) 826-0011 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday-Friday

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Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
Phone: (317) 234-6713
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Mold Can Be a Problem Long After Floodwaters Recede

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – If your home was affected by the March flooding, it may be hiding mold. Mold can be a significant problem after flooding and proper cleanup is critical to ensure that it does not affect you or your family's health.

People sensitive to mold may experience a stuffy nose, irritated eyes, skin irritation, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath. People with asthma, pregnant women, infants, the elderly and individuals with compromised immune systems are at higher risk for health problems from mold. If you or your family members have health problems

after exposure to mold, contact your doctor or other health care provider.

To prevent or stop the growth of mold after a flood, all areas of a home that were wet in the floodwaters must be cleaned and completely dried. Mold can start to grow within 48 hours. Discard all moldy carpeting and any porous materials such as books, clothing, bedding or furniture that already smells of mold or is visibly growing mold. Remember, when in doubt, throw it out.

Once a house has a mold problem, all areas of the home must be checked, cleaned and dried including air ducts and basement crawl spaces. To prevent further mold growth, seal all leaks in roofs, walls or pipes that bring excess moisture into the house. Discard all moldy drywall, ceiling tiles and wet insulation. Keep receipts from the cleaning process since disaster assistance may be available to help with cleaning costs.

To clean away mold already growing on hard surfaces, use commercial products, soap and water, or a bleach solution of no more than 1 cup of bleach per one gallon of water. Use a stiff brush on rough surface materials such as concrete. Always open windows and doors while working with bleach to provide fresh air and wear non-porous gloves and protective eyewear during the cleaning process.

Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners. Mixing bleach with other cleaning products will produce dangerous, toxic fumes so always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using cleaning products.

Damage to a home from flooding may be so extensive that it may seem easier to hire a contractor or cleaning service to help with flood damage cleanup. When hiring a contractor, use extra care in the hiring process and make sure they have experience cleaning up mold.

Whenever possible, deal with trained and experienced professionals in your own community. These are business people with a local reputation to protect and can be held accountable for their work. Avoid offers that seem too good to be true. FEMA does not endorse specific contracting companies.

For more information on mold and mold cleanup, the Environmental Protection Agency provides a comprehensive description on the dangers of mold and how to clean and disinfect a mold-damaged home on its web page. Mold resources are available at www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html.

Those affected by the March 8 -14 severe storms, tornadoes and flooding can begin applying for assistance by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the speech- or hearing-impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers operate from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m. (EDT) seven days a week. Individuals can also register online at www.disasterassistance.gov. Registration deadline is June 22.

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For immediate release: May 13, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
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Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

3 Additional Counties Approved for Federal Assistance

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Mitch Daniels received word today that President Barack Obama has approved federal assistance for homeowners, renters and businesses in three additional counties that suffered damage from severe weather that occurred March 8-14.

They are Daviess, Lawrence and St. Joseph counties.
Counties previously approved for federal individual assistance are Allen, Carroll, DeKalb, Fulton, Jasper, Kosciusko, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Noble, Pulaski, White and Whitley counties.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) individual assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in those counties can begin applying for FEMA assistance immediately by registering online at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers are available 7 a.m.-1 a.m. (EDT), seven days a week.

On Sunday, March 8, severe storms broke out, spawning three tornadoes, high winds and torrential rainfall. Nearly eight inches of rain fell during a 72-hour period in some locations. Heavy rain on frozen and partially frozen ground quickly led to flooding conditions.

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For immediate release: May 14, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
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Tell Your Neighbor About Disaster Assistance

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. -- Nearly 900 Indiana residents have applied for disaster assistance to date and more than \$1.4 million has been approved for eligible applicants. Officials want to make sure no one is overlooked.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) officials are enlisting the help of area residents to ensure everyone is aware that disaster assistance is available.

So far the agencies have used television, radio, newspapers, Internet, flyers and door-to-door visits to get the word out. By using the Tell-Your-Neighbor campaign, they now are getting the public involved by notifying their neighbors that they may be eligible to receive federal disaster help.

"We're hoping the public will help us spread the message," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Regis Phelan. "Take a few moments to call or knock on your neighbors' doors to see if they have applied with FEMA and the SBA."

"Disasters tend to bring out the best in people, so we're confident the public will help speed the recovery by talking to their neighbors and relatives," said IDHS Executive Director Joseph Wainscott, Jr.

Severe storms, tornadoes and flooding from March 8-14 affected many Indiana neighborhoods. President Obama declared 16 counties federal disaster areas for Individual Assistance; this opened the door for federal funds to assist homeowners, renters and business owners in recovery.

FEMA Housing Assistance grants cover rental assistance, home repairs and replacement of essential household items not covered by insurance. The objective is to make damaged dwellings safe, sanitary and functional. Other Needs Assistance grants may be available to replace personal property and help meet medical, dental, funeral, transportation and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance or other federal, state and charitable-aid programs.

Eligible residents affected by these storms and flooding should apply as soon as possible by calling the toll-free registration number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Speech- or hearing-impaired individuals may call TTY 1-800-462-7585. Individuals also can apply for disaster assistance at the FEMA Web site www.disasterassistance.gov.

The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations for losses not fully covered by insurance. The SBA may lend up to \$200,000 to repair or replace homes and up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property. Also, up to \$2 million is available for businesses for their uncompensated disaster losses.

For more information about SBA, call the SBA Customer Service Center from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT) Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT), Saturday, at 1-800-659-2955 for information and assistance. Victims may apply online at <http://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. Applicants also may visit the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

Officials want to encourage those residents who may be hesitant to register for disaster assistance. This is not charity; this is federal taxpayer money set aside specifically for disaster assistance. Also, the assistance one individual may receive will not take away from another applicant's federal assistance funds.

Although the assistance process may continue after the deadline, June 22 will be the last day to call or go online to apply for FEMA and SBA physical disaster assistance.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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For immediate release: May 15, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
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Email: pio@dhs.in.gov

SBA Opens Disaster Loan Outreach Centers; Officials Stress Submit Disaster Loan Applications Now

ATLANTA – The U.S. Small Business Administration announces today that they are establishing two Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (DLOCs) on May 18; one in Fulton County at the Rochester Fire Department and the other in LaPorte County at the LaPorte Parks and Recreation Department. The establishment of the Centers demonstrates SBA's commitment to ensure that every qualified individual and business receives the help they need to recover from this disaster.

"Assisting individuals and business owners to recover from a disaster is our primary mission," said Frank Skaggs, director of SBA Field Operations Center East. "We are encouraging anyone affected by this disaster to visit a center while we still have staff here and obtain individual assistance with completing their loan applications from our representatives."

Many residents and businesses that have registered with FEMA for assistance have received an SBA disaster loan application. Completing the loan application and returning it is a crucial step toward disaster recovery. Homeowners and renters unable to obtain a disaster loan from the SBA may be referred to FEMA for grant consideration. To be eligible for these grants, applicants must submit their SBA loan application even if they do not want a loan. No one is required to accept a loan.

The locations of the Centers are as follows:

SBA Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (DLOCs)

Fulton County LaPorte County

Rochester Fire Dept LaPorte Parks and Recreation Department

2006 East State Route 14 250 Pine Lake Avenue

Rochester, IN 46975 LaPorte, IN 46350

Opens Monday, May 18 Opens Monday, May 18

Open Monday-Friday; 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

(closed May 25 for Memorial Day) Open Monday-Friday; 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

(closed May 25 for Memorial Day)

Closing Thursday, May 28 at the close of business Closing Thursday, May 28 at the close of business

FEMA/SBA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)

Open Monday-Saturday; 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Fulton County Pulaski County White County

Rochester Fire Dept Winamac Municipal Utility Complex White County EMA Office

2006 East State Route 14 623 West 11th Street 315 N. Illinois Street

Rochester, IN 46975 Winamac, IN 46996 Monticello, IN 47960

Closing Sat. May 16 at the close of business as a FEMA DRC and reopens Monday, May 18 as an SBA Disaster Loan Outreach Center.

Mobile DRCs – Open Monday – Sunday; 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Marshall County Noble County

Church of the Heartland Albion Fire Dept.

705 East Jefferson Street 210 Fire Station Drive

Plymouth, IN 46563 Albion, IN 46701

Open Fri., May 15 thru Mon, May 18 Open Sat., May 16 thru Tue, May 19

Closing Monday, May 18 at the close of business. Closing Tuesday, May 19 at the close of business.

“Loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property,” Frank Skaggs added.

Businesses of any size and non-profit organizations in the following counties may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, inventory, machinery and equipment. The SBA can also lend additional funds to help with the cost of making improvements that protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage from occurring in the future

For small businesses and private non-profit organizations of all sizes, the SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. EIDL assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any property damage.

Interest rates are as low as 2.187 percent for homeowners and renters, and 4.000 percent for businesses with terms up to 30 years. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition.

Anyone unable to visit one of the Centers may obtain information and loan applications by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (or 1-800-877-8339 for the hearing impaired) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. EDT, or by sending an email to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Business loan applications may be downloaded from www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance. Applications may be returned to one of the Disaster Recovery Centers or mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, Texas, 76155.

Those affected by the disaster may apply for disaster loans from SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is June 22, 2009. The deadline to return economic injury applications is January 22, 2010.

For more information about the SBA's Disaster Loan Programs, visit our website at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

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For immediate release: May 15, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
Contact: John Erickson or Rachel Meyer
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Health Commissioner Encourages Influenza Town Hall Meetings

INDIANAPOLIS---State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. is encouraging counties to host town hall meetings this summer to help Hoosiers prepare for the possibility of an influenza (flu) pandemic.

"Given the current heightened awareness about influenza and the uncertainty about what we can expect from the flu season this Fall, it is an ideal time to get the public engaged in pandemic influenza planning," said Dr. Monroe. "To be a prepared society, every one of us needs to actively participate."

Dr. Monroe says the state has been engaged in pandemic influenza preparedness planning for years. On March 23, 2006, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security co-hosted "Indiana Prepares: Pandemic Influenza State Summit" at Purdue University in West Lafayette. U.S. Health and

Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, Gov. Mitch Daniels, and senior officials from other federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Agriculture, participated in the event with state officials.

Following the 2006 Summit, Dr. Monroe encouraged local health departments to host pandemic influenza summits. By 2007, most of the 94 local health departments had hosted county-level summits with the support of the State Department of Health, Purdue Extension Services, and local hospitals around the state. The State Department of Health developed and distributed pandemic influenza toolkits to every local health department and hospital in Indiana to help with the summits and preparedness planning.

Once again, Dr. Monroe is advocating for local town hall meetings so Indiana communities can review and update their pandemic influenza plans. She says local health departments would most likely take the lead in hosting these events, but the goal would be for representatives from public safety and emergency management, business, schools, hospitals, the faith community, and the public attend the town hall meetings to revisit those plans.

“The key to effective public health practice is to have continuous quality improvement,” said Dr. Monroe. “I am proud of how Indiana responded to the current H1N1 flu outbreak and applaud the outstanding work of our local, state, and federal partners. However, we also have an incredible teachable moment as a result of the current outbreak. If we don't seize this moment, we will lose an opportunity to improve upon what I think are good plans.”

Joe Wainscott, executive director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, said, “Thankfully the affects of the H1N1 virus have not been as severe as they could have been. We need to continue planning for all types of emergencies – including potential return of the virus in the fall and spring and summer severe weather. A preparedness plan is important for all types of emergencies. “

Dr. Monroe says the Indiana State Department of Health will use lessons learned from the current outbreak to update the pandemic influenza toolkit and the agency's pandemic influenza plan.

For more information on pandemic influenza, visit the Indiana State Department of Health's Web site at: www.statehealth.in.gov and click on “Pandemic Influenza Home.” For more information about how to prepare for a pandemic or other emergency, go to www.in.gov/dhs

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For immediate release: May 15, 2009
Posted by: [DHS]
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Dispelling Myths About Flood Insurance

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – Buying flood insurance can provide protection and peace of mind. Flooding is one of the most common natural hazards in the United States. State and federal officials want to ensure that all Indiana residents are aware of the benefits of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Below are some common myths and misconceptions about flood insurance.

Myth: Only homeowners can purchase flood insurance.

FACT: Most homeowners, condo unit owners, renters, and businesses in NFIP participating communities can purchase flood insurance. To find out if your community participates, go to www.floodsmart.gov or contact a community official or insurance agent. The maximum coverage amounts are:

- Condominium unit owners: up to \$250,000 in structural coverage and up to \$100,000 in contents coverage
- Renters: up to \$100,000 in contents coverage
- Businesses: up to \$500,000 in commercial structural coverage and up to \$500,000 in contents coverage

Myth: You can't buy flood insurance if you are located in a high-flood-risk area.

FACT: You can buy National Flood Insurance no matter where you live, as long as your community participates in the NFIP. The NFIP was created in 1968 to make federally backed flood insurance available to property owners, renters, and businesses in participating communities.

Myth: If you live in an unmapped area, you don't need flood insurance.

FACT: Even areas in unmapped flood zones are susceptible to flooding, although to varying degrees. If you live in a high risk flood zone, it is advisable to have flood insurance. However, between 20 and 25 percent of the NFIP's claims come from low to medium risk flood zones. Residential and commercial property owners located in the lower risk zones should ask their insurance agents if they are eligible for the Preferred Risk Policy, which provides very inexpensive flood insurance protection.

Myth: You can't buy flood insurance if your property has been flooded before.

FACT: You are still eligible to purchase a flood insurance policy after your home, condo, apartment, or business has been flooded, provided that your community is participating in the NFIP.

Myth: Homeowners insurance policies cover flooding.

FACT: Unfortunately, many home and business owners do not find out until it is too late that their homeowners and business insurance policies do not cover flooding. The NFIP offers a separate policy that protects the single most important financial asset, which for most people is their home or business. Homeowners can include contents coverage in

their NFIP policy. Residential and commercial renters can purchase flood insurance coverage for their buildings and contents/inventory and, by doing so, protect their livelihood.

Myth: Federal disaster assistance will pay for flood damage.

FACT: Before a community is eligible for disaster assistance, it must be declared a federal disaster area. Federal disaster assistance declarations are issued in fewer than 50 percent of flooding events. Furthermore, if you are uninsured and receive federal disaster assistance after a flood, you must purchase flood insurance to remain eligible for future disaster relief. Disaster assistance does not cover as much as flood insurance, and flood insurance claims can be paid very rapidly after the event.

Myth: You can't buy flood insurance immediately before or during a flood.

FACT: You can purchase National Flood Insurance at any time. There is usually a 30-day waiting period after you buy flood insurance before the policy is effective. In most cases, the policy does not cover a "loss in progress," which is defined as a loss occurring as of midnight on the first day your policy goes into effect. Basically, if you buy flood insurance after a flood, it will not cover your past losses, only losses after the policy goes into effect. New or refinanced mortgages are exempt from the 30-day waiting period.

Myth: The NFIP does not offer basement coverage.

FACT: While basement improvements such as finished walls and floors, and personal belongings in a basement are not covered by flood insurance, structural elements and essential equipment within a basement are. The following items are covered under building coverage, as long as they are connected to a power source, if required, and installed in their functioning location:

- Sump pumps
- Well water tanks and pumps, cisterns, and the water in them
- Oil tanks and the oil in them, natural gas tanks and the gas in them
- Pumps and/or tanks used in conjunction with solar energy
- Furnaces, water heaters, air conditioners, and heat pumps
- Electrical junction and circuit breaker boxes and required utility connections
- Foundation elements
- Stairways, staircases, elevators, and dumbwaiters
- Unpainted drywall walls and ceilings, including fiberglass insulation
- Cleanup

More information on flood insurance is available on the Internet at www.floodsmart.gov, or by calling toll-free 1-888-275-6347 or TTY 1-800-427-5593 for the speech- and hearing-impaired.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to

reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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For immediate release: May 15, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

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Victims of Severe Weather Urged to Report Damage Online

INDIANAPOLIS – Hoosiers who sustained damage caused by flooding, rain and wind that began May 12 are urged to visit the Indiana Department of Homeland Security website at www.in.gov/dhs and report their damage.

Information will be taken through Friday, May 29. Affected Hoosiers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number, extent and type of damage the property sustained. Losses can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property.

This is not an application for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. Information will be used to help local emergency management agencies and IDHS preliminarily assess damage to determine if federal assistance can be pursued. This is one of eight steps that must be taken to decide if we are eligible for federal assistance. Below is the eight steps of the declaration process.

THIS REPORT IS NOT AN APPLICATION FOR ANY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Be sure to consult your local permitting official before starting any repairs!

The Declaration Process

When a disaster occurs, the following steps are followed:

Step 1. Local emergency and public works personnel, volunteers, humanitarian organizations, and other private interest groups provide emergency assistance required to meet immediate human needs and restore essential services vital to public health and safety.

Step 2. At the same time, preliminary damage and impact information is gathered by local government and emergency officials and conveyed to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Emergency Operation Center.

Step 3. If necessary, the Governor declares a state of emergency and invokes the state's emergency plan to augment individual and public needs as required, including the use of the National Guard's military resources.

Step 4. When the state determines that the recovery appears to be beyond these combined resources, a request for FEMA to conduct a preliminary damage assessment is made.

Step 5. FEMA personnel from the regional office responsible for the area where the disaster occurred are deployed and join state and local representatives to conduct joint damage assessments and submit the results to the Governor's office.

Step 6. If the state judges that this survey data indicates full recovery is beyond available capabilities, the Governor submits a written request to the President through FEMA's regional office asking that federal aid be provided under a major disaster or emergency declaration.

Step 7. Following a FEMA regional and national office review of the request and findings of the joint damage survey, the Agency's Director provides the President with an analysis of the disaster conditions and a recommendation course of action.

Step 8. From this information the President declares a major disaster or emergency exists in the state, or FEMA advises the Governor of a denial of the request

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For immediate release: May 19, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

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Toll-Free Number Now Available for Severe Weather Victims to Report Damage

INDIANAPOLIS – Hoosiers who sustained damage caused by severe weather, including wind and flooding beginning May 12 are urged to call a toll free number to report damage. The number (866-210-1925) is staffed from 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (EST) weekdays through Friday, May 29, 2009. Damage reports also may be made online via the IDHS web site at www.in.gov/dhs.

Callers will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number, and type and extent of damage the property sustained. Losses can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property.

Individuals calling will not be in conversation with the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA). Information will be used to help local emergency management agencies and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security preliminarily assess damage to determine if federal assistance can be pursued. This is one of eight steps that must be taken to decide if we are eligible for federal assistance. Below are the eight steps of the declaration process.

THIS REPORT IS NOT AN APPLICATION FOR ANY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Be sure to consult your local permitting official before starting any repairs!

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For immediate release: May 22, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

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Be Aware of State Fireworks Laws - Use Caution and Be Safe

INDIANAPOLIS - With the fireworks season in full swing, Indiana citizens and retailers are being reminded of the state law governing the use and sale of fireworks. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) Fire & Building Safety division urges Hoosiers to play it safe when using fireworks this summer.

In March of 2006, Governor Mitch Daniels signed a law that will help fund important public safety programs around the state, such as firefighter training, through the collection of a 5-percent safety fee on the sale of all fireworks. The law also includes requirements regarding where and when consumers can set off fireworks, as well as requirements for structures where fireworks are sold.

“Hoosiers need to remember that restrictions are in place regarding the use of fireworks, as well as the possible penalties for violations,” said Jim Greeson, State Fire Marshal. “We want to stress the personal responsibility of each fireworks consumer. Obey our laws, follow directions for safe use and apply common sense.”

Fireworks law provisions:

- Fireworks may be used only on the user’s property; or on the property of someone who has consented to the use of fireworks; or at a special discharge location.
- Fireworks can be purchased only by persons 18 years of age or older and children may possess or use any kind of firework only when an adult is present.
- Penalties for violating the fireworks law can range from a Class A misdemeanor up to a Class C felony in the case of the reckless or intentional use of fireworks that results in a person’s death.
- On Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day and New Year’s Eve, fireworks may be discharged from 9 a.m. to midnight. Any other day of the year fireworks may be discharged from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Local laws may further affect fireworks use.

The IDHS Fire & Building Safety Division recommends Hoosiers check the fireworks they purchase to ensure they contain the following information:

- Class "C"
- Consumer Fireworks
- 1.4 g

"If you find a package that you cannot read because it is in a foreign language, it says Class 'B' fireworks, or 1.3 g, we strongly encourage you to call the Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline (800-638-2772)," Greeson added.

If you would like more information on fireworks or the IDHS Building Safety Division, please visit www.in.gov/dhs

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For immediate release: May 27, 2009

Posted by: [DHS]

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WHEN, not IF: Preparing Your Business For Disasters

INDIANAPOLIS — Officials from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urge businesses to plan now for future disasters. When the next flood or other disaster strikes, getting your company back to business quickly may depend on emergency planning done today.

"Planning for disasters, natural or manmade, will help protect your business investment and give your company a better chance for survival," said Regis Phelan, FEMA federal coordinating officer.

Business owners should include these additional factors in their disaster planning:

- Carefully assess the risks (e.g., flood, fire, tornado, etc.) for each specific business location and plan accordingly.
- Identify operations critical to your company's survival and recovery.
- Determine which staff members, materials, procedures and equipment are necessary to keep the business operating and establish procedures for succession of management.
- Plan what you will do if your building, plant or store is not accessible.
- Your employees and co-workers are your business's most valuable assets and should be included at all levels in planning for and responding to a disaster.
- Maintain two-way communications with employees before, during and after a disaster; promote family and individual preparedness and support employee health after a disaster.
- Establish a means of contacting employees who have been displaced from their homes by the disaster. Also, be sure employees have an alternate method of contacting

the business if it is forced from its normal location.

- Make an evacuation plan should a disaster require employees, customers and visitors to leave the workplace quickly
- For situations where it is best to stay where you are, such as during a tornado or a chemical incident, plan for sheltering in place.
- Maintain a list of telephone and fax numbers of employees, customers, vendors, bankers, attorneys, insurance agents, professional recovery services, equipment rentals and emergency agencies.
- Prepare for extended utility interruptions during and after a disaster. Speak with service providers about potential alternatives and identify back-up options such as portable generators to power the vital aspects of your business in an emergency.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Disaster Assistance, recommends businesses have an annual insurance "check-up" to assure coverage meets the specific risks at the business site, to be sure both the building and its contents are covered, and to protect against business interruptions. The SBA reminds business owners that most hazard insurance policies do not cover flood losses and that a separate policy through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) may be required.

The SBA also stresses the importance of preserving vital business records, financial data, accounting records, personnel information, marketing strategies, insurance records, inventory information, etc. Computerized records should be backed up daily and the backups, along with other vital records, should be stored off-site at least 500 miles away.

For more information on business preparedness and to order free sample emergency plans, business preparedness checklists and more, call **1-800-BE-READY (237-3239)**. You can download disaster preparedness information at www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance or at www.ready.gov/business.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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